

**SVSU High Education Testimony**  
**Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019**

Good morning.

Chairman VanSingel, Vice Chair Bollin, Minority Vice Chair Anthony and all members of the committee:

It is my pleasure to address you this morning and I thank you for the opportunity.

Saginaw Valley State University is a regional public university in the Great Lakes Bay Region.

This region is comprised on Bay, Midland and Saginaw counties.

The Great Lakes Bay Region is home to 600 businesses, including major corporations such as the Dow Chemical Company and Nexteer Automotive.

SVSU employs 1,280 individuals in the region to support a student body of over 8,500.

- 3,200 of those students are first generation students
- 800 are graduate students
- 500 are international students
- 500 student-athletes
- 170 student veterans
- And 130 out of state students

We continually expand our high-quality academic programs in each of our five colleges:

- The College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences
- The College of Education
- The College of Science, Engineer and Technology
- The Crystal M. Lange College of Health and Human Services
- And the Scott L. Carmona College of Business and Management

The later three are professionally accredited, offering value to our degrees and allowing us to better attract high-caliber students.

The average class size is 23 students.

We work to prepare thousands of traditional and non-traditional students for their careers. 2,600 of those students live in our award-winning housing facilities.

We continue to meet the changing needs of all students by offering flexible learning formats, including hybrid and online education, and by offering academic resources for student success.

Student support through nationally certified testing centers and free tutoring centers give students what they need to succeed academically.

These, in combination with our strong academic programs produce some of the finest members of the regional workforce.

As undergraduates, our students take advantage of opportunities difficult to find elsewhere, giving them a competitive edge among their peers upon graduation.

These range from internships at major corporations to involvement in clubs and teams that perform on a national level.

Our business students, for example, participate in global education in and out of the classroom, and will enjoy dynamic learning opportunities through the expanded Scott L. Carmona College of Business in 2020.

Our science, engineering and technology students participate in meaningful research including watershed preservation research and compete on a global scale through our Formula One Racing Team.

Our pre-med students enjoy a medical program placement rate that is above the national average,

And our education students engage in meaningful field experiences that often lead to full time teaching jobs upon graduation, which helps to alleviate the state-wide teacher shortage.

In short, we prepare students in unique ways to contribute to our larger community.

Some of our students and graduates obtain jobs downstate at companies like Quicken Loans, while others stay close to the region, employed at Dow Chemical, Consumers Energy and others.

I often have the pleasure of hearing about how well our graduates perform in their jobs; we know SVSU graduates are highly valued in their fields.

This is a great point of pride for us.

We are also proud of our Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, which we received in 2015.

Only 7% of accredited higher education institutions in the U.S. received this classification, and we feel that we are particularly deserving of it.

At SVSU, students find multiple opportunities for civic engagement and university involvement, which enhance their academic experiences.

Our Student Association once again won the annual Battle of the Valleys fundraising competition against Grand Valley State University. Both institutions have brought in well over

half a million dollars toward community organizations of their choice through this fundraising campaign over the years.

This year, \$36,000 went to the Barb Smith Suicide Resource and Response Network.

Our relatively new Center for Community Engagement provides support for a number of important community engagement initiatives, including civic engagement activities geared toward increasing voter turnout for the November 2018 election.

And our faculty work to provide state-recognized health centers, delivering quality healthcare to underserved populations.

We also look forward to collaborating with other community organizations and businesses to host the FIRST Robotics State Championship for the third time April 10-13. I invite all who are available to visit us for this very exciting tournament.

These efforts, and many more, have led to outstanding recognitions to our university including:

- **Great Colleges to Work For** through the *Chronicle of Higher Education* – third year in a row
- **Best for Vets** through *Military Times* – fifth year in a row
- **Higher Education Excellence in Diversity** award from *INSIGHT into Diversity Magazine*
- **No. 1 rated dorms** in the state of Michigan and No. 8 in the country through *NICHE* online educational ranking website

We continue to maintain the lowest operational cost per square foot of the 15 public universities,

And we received positive reviews for our fiscal management.

- Moody's Investment Service gave SVSU an A1 investment rating for "prudent financial discipline"
- Standard and Poor's Financial Services assigned SVSU a "High A Credit Rating"

This is very good news for us considering the nation-wide dip in student enrollment.

All of these accomplishments and "points of pride" enable us to be a resource for our community and our state.

We serve our state best by continuing to be one of the most affordable universities in Michigan for 25 years.

Affordability, especially for first-generation students, makes quality education accessible to students who may not otherwise have such an opportunity.

We offer around \$50 million dollars in need-based aid to incoming students, but we also partner with local community foundations on promise scholarships in Saginaw, Bay County and Detroit.

We also do this through the support of our legislature, whose appropriations make affordable college degrees possible.

We understand the necessity of accountability to the State for such support, and so agree that performance metrics should be utilized to ensure accountability for public funds.

I have been an employee of SVSU for over 40 years, and while presidency brings various challenges, it also brings tremendous opportunity.

I am very proud of our institution, our students and our graduates and I remain grateful for the support we have received from our legislators in the State of Michigan.

I look forward to working with you in the coming months, and I thank you once again for your time today.